



# Montrose Settlements Restoration Program

Restoring Natural Resources harmed by DDT and PCBs

*The Montrose Settlements Restoration Program has made advances in efforts to restore natural resources injured by DDTs and PCBs in the Southern California marine environment.*

### Litigation Ends, Restoration Begins

From the late 1940s to the early 1970s, millions of pounds of DDTs and PCBs were discharged from industrial sources through a wastewater outfall into the ocean near Los Angeles. Large quantities of these chemicals remain in the marine environment and continue to harm birds and impair fishing in the Southern California Bight (see map).

Throughout the U.S., DDTs in the food of bald eagles and peregrine falcons have caused these birds to lay defective eggs with thin eggshells. Bald eagles reintroduced to Santa Catalina Island have had difficulty hatching their eggs without human assistance. In addition, some species of seabirds in the Bight were documented to have high levels of DDTs. For certain species of fish contaminated with high levels of DDTs and PCBs near Los Angeles, the State of California has issued fish consumption advisories. The State has also banned commercial fishing

for white croaker near the Palos Verdes Peninsula.

The State and Federal governments initiated action against Montrose Chemical Corporation and the other polluters responsible for the injuries. In December 2000, a final settlement was signed, ending ten years of litigation.

Following Superfund law, the funds will be used for two different types of activities:

1. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control will use a share of the funds to reduce the exposure of people and wildlife to DDTs and PCBs. For example, these agencies are considering covering the contaminated sediments with clean sediments and conducting additional efforts to reduce public consumption and prevent commercial catch of contaminated fish. For more about these activities, contact EPA at (800) 231-3075.



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**Above:** Large quantities of DDTs and PCBs continue to harm birds and impair fishing in the Southern California Bight. **Left:** Fishermen collect samples for the MSRP fish contamination survey. **Upper Left:** Restoration efforts will aim to restore bald eagles to the California Channel Islands.

2. The Natural Resource Trustees, through the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP), will use approximately \$30 million to restore natural resources harmed by the DDTs and PCBs.

## Who are the Natural Resource Trustees?

The Natural Resource Trustees are a group of six Federal and State resource agencies that together administer the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program. These agencies are:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
- National Park Service,
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,
- California Department of Fish and Game,
- California Department of Parks and Recreation, and
- California State Lands Commission.

## Taking Action

As required by Superfund law, the Trustees must use the settlement monies to restore natural resources that were harmed by chemicals at issue in this case. Thus, the Trustees will focus restoration efforts on the birds and fishing resources affected by these contaminants.

The Trustees organized the natural resources to be addressed into four categories:

- Bald Eagles
- Peregrine Falcons
- Seabirds and
- Fish/Fishing

Initial restoration planning efforts included:

- Public outreach to inform the community about the settlement and to solicit public involvement in the restoration process.
- Surveying contaminant levels in sport and commercial fish in conjunction with the US EPA. This will allow the Trustees to plan projects to create better fishing environments and inform the public about fish and fishing locations with low levels of contaminated fish. The results of this survey should be available in 2005.

- Initiating a study to evaluate the feasibility of reintroducing bald eagles to the Channel Islands National Park. To date, 32 eagles have been released and 22 remain on the Islands. In Summer 2004, biologists began recapturing birds to measure contaminant levels. When the birds reach reproductive age (within the next few years), biologists will monitor nests to determine if the eagles can reproduce successfully on their own.

Initial efforts also included the formal gathering of public input. Public workshops were held in 2002 and 2003, where the Trustees solicited the public's help to identify the best projects to meet the restoration goals. Close to 100 restoration ideas were put forth by outside organizations and individuals, as well as by MSRP staff. Staff then organized and screened the projects, and are currently using specific criteria to identify preferred projects, to be put forth for public review in the Montrose Settlements Draft Restoration Plan, due out in early 2005.

## Your Involvement is Important

DDTs and PCBs dumped in the ocean years ago continue to harm natural resources in coastal Southern California. Now that the Trustees have settled the lawsuit brought against those responsible, you can help us select the best restoration projects. Please visit our web site at [www.montroserestoration.gov](http://www.montroserestoration.gov) to watch for announcements on meetings and events. Call (866) 795-7786 or e-mail us at [msrp@noaa.gov](mailto:msrp@noaa.gov) to be placed on a distribution list to receive notices of upcoming events and document releases.

## What are DDTs and PCBs?

DDTs and PCBs are toxic mixtures of chemicals that are very slow to break down in the environment, and accumulate in plants and animals. Most of the DDTs and PCBs contaminating the marine environment near Los Angeles came from companies that dumped their waste chemicals into the local sewer system. The sewer system discharges its wastewater into the ocean near White Point, between San Pedro and Palos Verdes.

DDT was once one of the most widely used pesticides. One of the largest DDT factories in the world was located in Torrance, CA. It dumped hundreds of tons of waste DDT into the Los Angeles sewer system between the late 1940s and the early 1970s. The U.S. banned the use of DDTs in 1972.

PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are a group of 206 related oil-like chemicals that had many different industrial uses, such as making paints, transformer coolants, and hydraulic fluids.

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*Upper Right: Several projects are being considered to enhance Xantus's Murrelet populations.*

*Right: MSRP projects may also benefit the threatened California brown pelican.*